

CELEBRATING AMERICA'S FREEDOMS

Guidelines for Display of the Flag

Public Law 94-344, known as the Federal Flag Code, contains rules for handling and displaying the U.S. flag. While the federal code contains no penalties for misusing the flag, states have their own flag codes and may impose penalties. The language of the federal code makes clear that the flag is a living symbol.

In response to a Supreme Court decision which held that a state law prohibiting flag burning was unconstitutional, Congress enacted the Flag Protection Act in 1989. It provides that anyone who knowingly desecrates the flag may be fined and/or imprisoned for up to one year. However, this law was challenged by the Supreme Court in a 1990 decision that the Flag Protection Act violates the First Amendment free speech protections.

Important Things to Remember

Traditional guidelines call for displaying the flag in public only from sunrise to sunset. However, the flag may be displayed at all times if it's illuminated during darkness. The flag should not be subject to weather damage, so it should not be displayed during rain, snow and wind storms unless it is an all-weather flag.

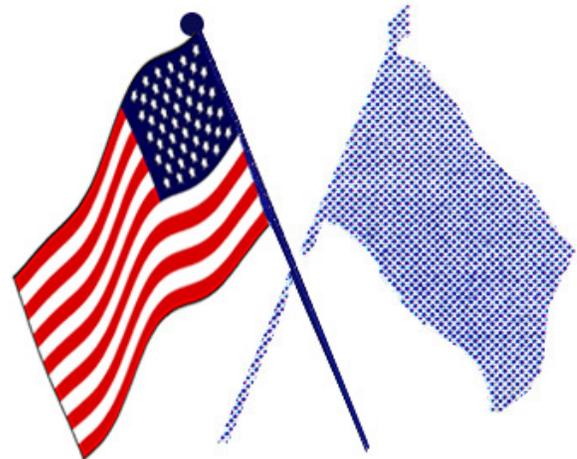
It should be displayed often, but especially on national and state holidays and special occasions.

The flag should be displayed on or near the main building of public institutions, schools during school days, and polling places on election days. It should be hoisted briskly and lowered ceremoniously.

When carried in procession with other flags, the U.S. flag should be either on the marching right (the flag's right) or to the front and center of the flag line. When displayed on a float in a parade, the flag should

be hung from a staff or suspended so it falls free. It should not be draped over a vehicle.

When displayed with another flag against a wall from crossed staffs, the U.S. flag should be on its own right (left to a person facing the wall) and its staff should be in front of the other flag's staff. In a group



of flags displayed from staffs, the U.S. flag should be at the center and the highest point.

When flags of states, cities or organizations are flown on the same staff, the U.S. flag must be at the top (except during church services conducted at sea by Navy chaplains). When other flags are flown from adjacent staffs, the U.S. flag should be hoisted first and lowered last. It must be on the right of other flags and no other flag should stand higher than it. Flags of other nations should be flown from separate staffs. International custom dictates that flags of different nations be displayed at the same height in peacetime and be approximately the same size.